

1st Armored Division



1/1 Cavalry

Photo SPC Sarah Stannard

In Action Series

IRONSIDE MAGAZINE



1st Armored Division

FALL 2005

America's Tank Division



IRONSIDE

Fall 2005

RAPID FIELDING INITIATIVE
GEARS 1AD WITH NEW EQUIPMENT

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Published in the interest of the Soldiers of 1st Armored Division

IRONSIDE

Magazine

Ironsides is published quarterly by the 1st Armored Division Public Affairs Office, HQ 1st Armored Division, AETV-THE-A, Unit 24309, APO AE 09096, DSN 337-4859, Commercial 0611-705-4859.

Printed circulations: 4000 copies. This Army funded magazine is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army overseas.

Contents of Ironsides are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or by the 1st Armored Division.

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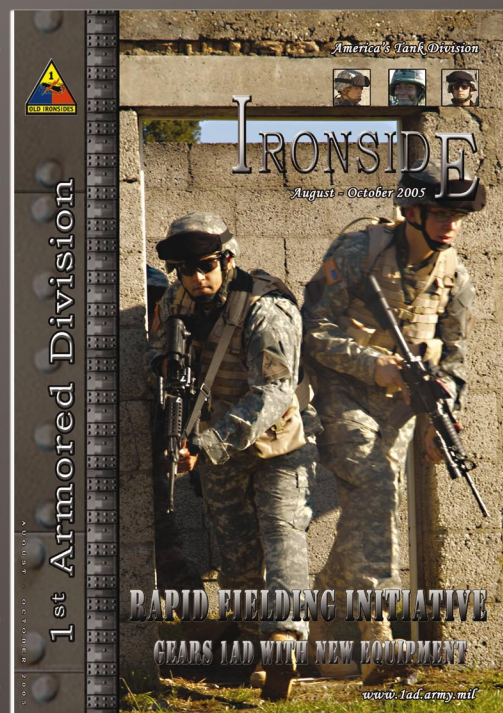
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COL Sean MacFarland assumed command of the Ready First Combat Team in the summer of 2005. In the last issue Col. Michael Bills was printed as assuming command, which was an error.

COVER PHOTO



Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 36th Armored Regiment train for future deployments in their new Army Combat Uniform. Photo by SGT Gregory Withrow



In this Issue...

- Page 4 **Division Commander Speaks**
- Page 5 **A Note from the Assistant Division Commander of Maneuver**
- Page 6 **1st Armored Division changes command**
- Page 8 **1st Brigade Solider earns highest peacetime medal**
- Page 9 **Sergeant Major of the Army visits 1st Armored Division**
- Page 10 **U.S. and Bulgarian Soldiers trade tactics**
- Page 16 **Iron Alliance extends to Black Sea**
- Page 20 **Iron Soldiers are warriors first**
- Page 26 **1st Armored Division gears up with Army Combat Uniform**
- Page 28 **Iron Brigade prepares for combat**
- Page 32 **141 Signals victory at Nijmegen**
- Page 36 **Old Ironsides and the Big Red One team up**
- Page 38 **Family Readiness groups prepare**



DIVISION COMMANDER SPEAKS

Iron Soldiers,

It is great to be back in Germany and part of the 1st Armored Division again. It has been a couple of years since I have served with Old Ironsides. Coming back to command the division is a tremendous honor.

I am incredibly proud of what I have seen so far. I thank you and your families for your service to the U.S. Army and our great nation.

We completed reconstitution and retraining — that's behind us. We are preparing for battle now.

Some of our Soldiers are on their way into the U.S. Central Command Area of Operations — Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa as I write this. We are still meeting our commitments in Europe and the EUCOM Area of Operations.

In the upcoming weeks and months more Iron Soldiers will complete their pre-combat checks before deploying while others must continue preparations for future battles.

Remember: everything we do and train for is, and should be, focused on preparing for battle.

Leaders, as you are getting your Soldiers, equipment and families ready for battle and deployment don't forget the lessons we've learned in the past several months of training. You and your units have sharpened your skills during recent gunneries, mission readiness exercises and command post exercises. Now you will put those skills to the test.

Some of you will deploy to combat for the first time. Others have deployed before with other units and some of you were in the division for its last deployment into combat.

Stick to the basics and adhere to the standards that you have been taught. Remember to treat everyone- friend or foe- with dignity and respect. You are an American Soldier.

For the Soldiers that are deploying again, use your wartime experiences and build upon the lessons that you have learned from your previous deployments and training. Soldiers

deploying for the first time, listen to what these veteran Soldiers and leaders tell you; they have been battle tested and understand what needs to be done to be successful on the battlefield.

Remain flexible and don't be afraid to adapt, the enemy certainly is.

While preparing for and conducting your task required, make sure you understand the mission and your commander's intent. Conduct pre-combat checks and inspections before movement. While on the mission take care of one another at all times and watch your buddy's back. Discipline and attention to detail are key.

The enemy is checking every move we make and looking for any opportunity to capitalize on a mistake. Don't give it to him.

To our Soldiers helping the Pakistanis in earthquake relief, you are doing important work. This is a great opportunity for Iron Soldiers to practice deployment operations and make a positive difference in the world. Take your mission seriously and use it as a tool in your preparations for future military operations. Assess what you have done and what you are currently doing. You can apply the lessons that you are learning and your experiences to future missions.

We marked the start of the fourth year of the continued fight against terrorism in October. Much has been accomplished and Iron Soldiers have been part of these accomplishments as the Army continues to help the nation meet its goals around the globe.

These accomplishments add up every day. Just recently, Iraqis passed a referendum to move forward with democracy. The battle is being won and you are helping win it.

Iron Soldiers, you make a difference every day. Stay safe and continue to prepare for battle.

Iron Soldiers!



A NOTE FROM THE ASSISTANT DIVISION COMMANDER OF MANEUVER

COL Michael Ryan

Every day is a great day to be an Iron Soldier in America's Armored Tank Division.

We are a first-rate unit committed to tough training, mission accomplishment and taking care of what makes us great: our Soldiers and their families.

As the Commanding General's senior trainer in the Division, I am dedicated to ensuring that all our Soldiers stay combat-ready for future operations.

Many Iron Soldiers have already been deployed into combat and many will undoubtedly deploy again. Those who haven't eventually will.

All Iron Soldiers must be ready.

As world events increase in complexity, and we ask more of our magnificent Soldiers, it is vital that we continue to emphasize the basics of soldiering that have always served us so well.

Some of these basics are:

- Conducting pre-combat checks and inspections (PCC/PCI).
- Conducting rehearsals.
- Making sure that ALL Soldiers know their mission and their commander's intent.
- All Soldiers know his or her role in that mission.
- Officers ensuring their sergeants have the time to get their Soldiers ready for combat or any other operation.
- Training, discipline and trust.

These basic but critical steps, done properly, ensure that we maximize the incredible potential of our individual Soldiers and, through them, our units.

Every military mission is an interlocking chain of events that we must master in order to dominate our battlespace.

Every mission, no matter how small we may think it may be, must be planned, prepared for and executed as a tactical mission to ensure success.

Our Soldiers are smarter, stronger and more capable than we have ever seen.

When they are fully engaged in a mission through some of the techniques outlined above, we will be assured of incredible success, no matter how challenging the situation or task.

None of these ideas are new or original. They are all part of basic leadership and the absolute foundation to battlefield success.

As we look ahead to our future training and to future combat deployments, we will best serve our comrades, our units, our Division and our great nation by making sure we do the basics routinely.

It will lead to routine success.

Iron Soldiers!



MG Robinson Takes Command of America's Tank Division

Story and photo by SGT Gregory F. Withrow

MG Fred D. (Doug) Robinson leads Soldiers of the 1st Armored Division during a ceremonial pass in review after assuming command of America's Tank Division on Minue Field, Wiesbaden Army Airfield, Germany, July 27.

Iron Soldiers of America's Tank Division welcomed a new commander during 1st Armored Division's Change of Command Ceremony on Wiesbaden Army Airfield's Minue Parade Field, Wiesbaden, Germany, July 27.

MG Fred D. (Doug) Robinson, Jr. assumed command of 1AD, receiving the division colors from V Corps' commanding general, LTG Ricardo Sanchez.

No stranger to the division, Robinson served as the assistant division commander for maneuver as a brigadier general during the early part of 1AD's deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom I. After former 1AD commander LTG Ricardo Sanchez assumed command of the V Corps and Joint Task Force 7 during OIF I, Robinson temporarily took the division's reigns, acting as the division's commander until the arrival of then BG Martin E. Dempsey. He passed the division's colors to Dempsey and departed for service in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army for Operations.

Dempsey has been nominated by President George W. Bush for appointment to the grade of lieutenant general and assignment as commanding general, Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq.

"It's great to be back among you," said Robinson, reflecting upon his previous stint with 1AD and looking forward to his new command.

But Robinson was not alone in his remembrance of time spent with "Old Ironsides."

In his farewell address, Dempsey recognized Iron Soldiers and their contributions to the Global War on Terrorism – especially those fallen in combat.

"Like you, I vow never to forget those who spent their last moments on earth as Iron Soldiers. On one of their graves is an epitaph that captures the profound sacrifice each of them made. It reads: 'Walk softly stranger, for here, lie dreams,'" said Dempsey.

"My parting thought to you who will continue to serve in the memory is this: 'Walk proudly Iron Soldiers, for you bring dreams.'"



Highest peacetime award bestowed on 1AD Soldier

Story and Photo by SPC Jennifer McFadden



SSG War Mobley was honored by LTC Vincent Tedesco, the 1st Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment battalion commander, with the Soldier's Medal during a ceremony held in Friedberg, Germany Aug. 31.

A 1st Armored Division Soldier was honored with the Soldier's Medal — the U. S. Army's highest peacetime recognition — during a ceremony held on Ray Barracks, Friedberg, Germany August 31.

SSG War Mobley, the family readiness liaison noncommissioned officer for the 1st Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment, was recognized for his heroism

by his battalion commander, LTC Vincent Tedesco, his wife Senait, and CSM Mark K. Schindler.

Mobley was again recognized by SMA Kenneth O. Preston during his visit to the 1st Armored Division, September 8.

The Soldier's Medal, the Army's highest peacetime medal, is awarded to a service member, regardless of duty status, who distinguishes himself/herself by heroism in situations other than actual combat.

"This is the first Soldier's medal I have awarded in my 19 years of service. It is truly motivating to have a noncommissioned officer like SSG Mobley in our unit," said Tedesco.

Mobley earned the award while assigned to the 4th Infantry Division, which is stationed at Fort Hood Texas.

This noncommissioned officer risked his life attempting to rescue two Soldiers in his unit during a tank accident that occurred while participating in a training exercise July 29, 2002 at Fort Hood, Texas.

"I saw the tank on fire and I just reacted. My adrenaline kicked in and I knew what I had to do," said Mobley.

With little time to waste, Mobley jumped onto a medic track to catch the tank.

The tank, which was on fire at this point and still in motion, finally came to rest when it slammed into a tree just outside the perimeters of the range.

The Baltimore Native "demonstrated the utmost bravery and selflessness as he evacuated his fallen comrades from the torched tank, putting his own life at risk," according to the award citation.

Mobley said he was honored and humbled to receive the award.

"I feel overwhelmed to have received this award and I honestly feel it belongs to the two Soldiers who perished that day," he said. "I would have done the same for any Soldier because we are a family - a brotherhood who protects each other in war and in peace."

Sergeant Major of the Army visits 1st Armored Division

Story and Photo by LeAnne MacAllister



Baumholder Soldiers had a chance to raise their concerns to the Army's senior noncommissioned officer during a visit by SMA Kenneth O. Preston Sept. 7.

Preston's visit included a tour of the Close Combat Tactical Trainer, lunch at the 2nd Brigade Dining Facility, a briefing with Soldiers at the Wagon Wheel Theater and a reception with noncommissioned officers at the Rheinlander Community Club.

"If there are things out there that need fixing, we're here to fix them. Don't be afraid to ask," said Preston during a meeting with 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, Soldiers participating in CCTT.

Preston touched on training preparedness, equipment concerns and the new Army Combat Uniform. At one point he brought a Soldier up to the front of an auditorium and explained the practicality of the new uniforms — from pattern to material, Velcro, zippers and head gear. He also encouraged feedback.

"The uniform has evolved and changed because of input from Soldiers like you," said Preston.

"I think this visit is very good for the Soldiers, a big morale booster," said CSM Michael Eyer, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry. "It shows Soldiers there's an interest about them above the battalion or brigade level."

"I think its cool he's here and actually takes the time to meet with Soldiers face to face," said PFC Evan Richardson, 2nd Brigade. "He talked a lot about how families will settle down in one base for five to six years

at a time. I know that's a big concern with the married guys and its good he's bringing the information to us."

Preston discussed three objectives aimed at adding more structure and stability to the Army. He described the Army's plan to increase the number of brigade combat teams.

BCTs are currently the core unit used in the modern battlefield and in deployment rotations. Increasing the number of combat teams from 33 to 43 by the end of 2006 will allow the Army to add more predictability and stability to scheduling and thus will give Soldiers more consistency in timelines and planning, Preston said.

Preston also cited the Army's need to rebalance the force.

"Basically, we are going to take 100,000 to 115,000 Soldiers and switch them to positions in high demand. We need the right balance of tools in the tool box. We currently have an excess on one side and a shortage on the other. We need to rebalance the force," said Preston.

Jobs that will see an increase in demand include military police and transportation positions, further extending the Army's capability to accomplish full-spectrum operations in today's war zones.



SMA Kenneth O. Preston greets members of a motorized rifle platoon from 1-6th Infantry in Baumholder.

The Army's third objective is to grow the base size of the Army by 30,000 Soldiers, the Army's senior noncommissioned officer said.

Preston gave Soldiers the floor for nearly an hour during a question and answer session.

The discussion ranged from the future of military occupational specialties to the purpose of the mission. One Soldier asked Preston to explain why the Army is currently in Iraq.

"Think about what the greatest generation did for Europe in World War II. I believe their work also brought down the Iron Curtain and made Europe safe. Now you can fast forward to today, to the Middle East. Look at what the U.S. is doing. They're standing up a democratic government that's of the people, for the people," Preston answered. "I refer to Soldiers today, to you, as being the next greatest generation."



U.S. and Bulgarian Soldiers Trade Tactics during Exercise Immediate Response

Story by SPC Sarah Stannard

Photos by SPC Sarah Stannard and SGT Kevin Abel



The ground rumbled as the U.S. Army train thundered into Zimnista Train Station, Bulgaria at the end of its four-day journey from Büdingen, Germany July 11.

Engines fired in to life and M1A1 Abrams tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, Humvees and heavy equipment transport trucks began to roll off the flatbed rail cars onto the Bulgarian soil.

Just the day before, a U.S. Air Force C-17 had landed at Besmear Air Base, Bulgaria. It's precious cargo: another Abrams. In the days that followed there would be more flights carrying more weapons, troops and their equipment.

"If you hadn't known better, you probably would have thought the United States decided to invade Bulgaria," said a 1st Armored Division Soldier commenting on the amount of equipment rolling in to the country. "But, if we're going to do a large scale exercise, we need people and equipment — large scale."

Troops hit Novo Selo Training Area, Bulgaria and immediately went to work turning the fest-tent city into a temporary home. The post dining facility, kitchen, staging area and living quarters would all be contained inside tents constructed on post.

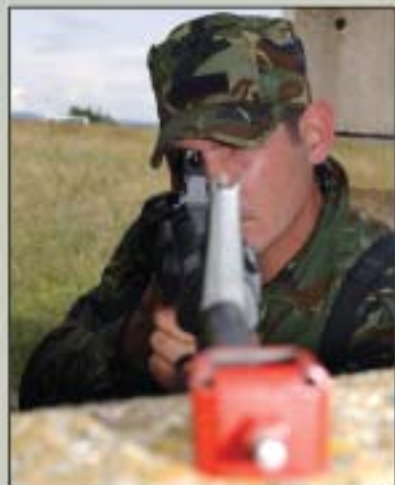
Though the official training exercise "Immediate Response '05" didn't start for another four days, the 1st Armored Division's Bandit Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, considered this their start of their first official mission.

American troops were eager to get their hands on their NATO ally's weapons systems at the "exchange shoot." They were just as eager for their Bulgarian counterparts to try their M-4 assault rifles, "Brads," and Abrams.

...Continued page 12...



A Bulgarian Soldier prepares to fire during a combined-forces training exercise with U.S. Soldiers at the Novo Selo Training Area, Bulgaria.



BMP personnel carriers plowed through the gunnery ranges. Soldiers exchanged their professional opinions about each other vehicles.

"The BMP camouflages itself really well. It sits so low to the ground, in the tall grass and trees you can't see it until it is right up on you," said SGT Jerry T. Goodwin, Bradley Fighting Vehicle gunner. "I actually got to shoot the BMP, and that's kind of a once-in-a-lifetime chance."

While the U.S. Soldiers investigated the Bulgarian weapons systems, Bulgarian troops tried their hand at firing the Bradley Fighting Vehicle and M-4.

Troops poured rounds down range at stationary and pop up targets.

Though it seemed Soldiers from the 1/1 CAV were only interested in the tanks, personnel carriers and small arms rolling around on the battlefield, there was something more important going on behind the scenes.

For the first time, the United States Army Europe deployed its mobile training analysis and feedback center, a system which provides up-to-the-second information on the simulated battle raging outside. Wireless cameras, videographers and multiple integrated laser engagement systems (MILES) allowed technicians to compile information for units and commanders to be used in their after action review.

"This is something that has never been done before," said CPT Rod Matthews, operations officer (G3), 7th Army Training Command. "It's not just a first for the 7th Army Training Command, it's a first for the Army as a whole, and we're doing it here."

All vehicles, weapons and per-



Protected by a Bradley Fighting Vehicle, 1st Armored Division's "Iron" Soldiers prepare for combat in a bilateral training exercise with Bulgarian Soldiers.

sonnel on the battlefield were supplied with MILES gear to simulate a combat situation. The MILES system registers which troop initiated a shot, where it hit and signaled if the target was hit.

American and Bulgarian troops joined forces to fight a common enemy, the "Altoonians," who were simulated by the Opposition Forces (OPFOR), 7th ATC's 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment. The Altoonians didn't stand a chance,

troops said later. The force cleared the battlefield without casualties and only one minor injury.

Bulgarian residents also got involved in the battlefield action. Civilians on the battlefield (COB) and representatives from the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC), Charlie Michel and David Camp, spent the days prior to the exercise preparing civilians from the near-by village of Mokren to play the parts of other COBs.

"Involving these civilians does a couple of different things. First of all, it allows the American government to spend some money in the local economy, which brings the two communities a little closer together," Michel said. "It also involves the local population in what we are doing here, so then it's not such a big secret."

As Soldiers worked together on the battlefield training on tactics and maneuvers, their leadership met

together to discuss tactics of a different sort. CSM David Davenport, 1/1 CAV's command sergeant major, gave a class to 11 of the Bulgarian Army's top leaders on the role, training and responsibilities of U.S. Army's non-commissioned officers.

He suggested ways that the Bulgarian Army might adopt of the NCO system their own doctrine.

MJRValentin Stoev, Land Force Headquarters, Department of Train-

...Continued next page...



ing and Use of Troops, attended the briefing and visited at length with the command sergeant major.

"Our system works," he said. "But, we want a system that will work better. We want to be members of NATO, doing things like this helps. If we can have a system that will work better, and help us to work better with our allies, we will do things differently and make our army and country better."

In the evenings, troops, officers and COBs living in the tent-barracks taught each other about their culture, language and leisure activities.

Americans taught their comrades to play dominos and spades, while the Bulgarian troops gave instruction on the Cyrillic alphabet and Bulgarian language.

"The Bulgarians taught me their characters and letters," said SPC Eddie J. Baker, Jr., mechanic for Headquarters and Headquarters Company Operations Group, CMTC. "Ok, so really they had to write them out for me...but, I'm working on learning them. When I leave here I'll have that stuff memorized."

Though language did prove to be a barrier at first, it was nothing the Soldiers at Novo Selo Training Area couldn't overcome. There were large groups of interpreters present on post, but in the barracks and on the battlefield hand signs became the language of choice.

SSG Leunda Clark, a mechanic, Headquarters Company Operations Group, CMTC, spent three weeks living in the tent barracks with Bulgarian soldiers.

"The language does make it hard, but we get by alright. If there's an interpreter around we use her, but if

not, pointing and making gestures works pretty well too. Someday when we are down range there might not be an interpreter, so it's nice to know that we can get by if we need to."

SPC Justin J. Horvath, 1/1 CAV scout said he was really impressed with the proficiency the Americans and Bulgarians displayed on the battlefield. The troops worked really well together and accomplished their mission easily, he said.

"The only thing that is really difficult is that when something needs to be told to the troops, it has to go all the way up our chain of command and then to [the Bulgarian] chain of command. In battle we can't wait that long, so we need to develop a system that will work better. It's good though that we're discovering these things now, so when we're down range we'll have all these problems worked out."

At the culmination of the live-fire exercise, the Bulgarian Army treated Americans to an evening of traditional dancing and singing. A group of Bulgarian folk dancers and singers, as well as two pop singers from Sofia, performed following a barbecue prepared by the U.S. Army cooks.

"This is really great," said PFC Raymond W. Boyington, 1/1 CAV scout. "We didn't expect to see anything like this. Even though we got to know a lot of the Bulgarians in the field, it's really neat to see what their culture is all about."

"It seems that we introduced them to a little bit of what American culture is all about too," said PFC Ryan

U.S. and Bulgarian Soldiers run for cover after being attacked during exercise Immediate Response '05.



T. Osborne, 1/1 CAV. "We had a big old barbecue; the only way that could get more American is if afterward we watched baseball."

"I really think this was an excellent training opportunity for the coalition forces," Horvath said. "We got the opportunity to teach Bulgarian soldiers that the days of driving a bunch of vehicles on-line, just pounding rounds down range, are really over. Now they know about the bounding overwatch and other maneuvers we use that are more tactical."

The official training mission completed, the joint work continued in Novo Selo Training Area as Soldiers again collaborated on clean-up and maintenance efforts. U.S. and Bulgarian troops pitched in to clean several days' worth of mud and brush from their equipment.

The chatter turned from the field exercise and soldiering to talk about families and favorite pastimes.

PFC Blake M. McCafferty, 1/1 CAV and Bulgarian PVT Videlin Cholakov, sniper, talked while they worked chiseling mud from the tracks of a Bradley.

"I'm surprised by how much we're all alike," McCafferty said. "Even across cultures, Soldiers want to play with big guns and get a kick out of tanks. We all have families and friends and stuff we like to talk about. I know, it sounds a little weird to say, but he's just like me."

"We started talking because we both wanted to play dominos," Cholakov continued. "We began to realize we have very much in common. We actually have little daughters the same age, and we think they can come to play together some day."

The same sentiment was echoed throughout the camp.

"It's really been a personal learning experience for me," said Goodwin. "I've learned a lot about other country's equipment and their tactics, but I've also learned a lot about people in general. I've learned about consideration for other people's culture and language, and I've also learned that there are ways for getting to know other people, even if you don't speak the same language."

"This exercise is a very important demonstration of partnership between two countries, the United States and Bulgaria, and within the NATO alliance," GEN B.B. Bell, The United States Army Europe commanding general, told a group of reporters at a press conference exercise highlighting the training exercise. "More importantly, however, this exercise allows my American Soldiers to partner with Bulgarian Army Soldiers and Air Force personnel to learn together, to become more interoperable and gain from each others tactical expertise."

"I think we've really done a good job of coming together and creating one force for this mission," Mathews said. "The Soldiers on the battlefield have really done an excellent job of using what resources they have to make the mission a success."

"I think after I retire from the Army, I'll move to Bulgaria," Horvath joked.

"The people here have been so awesome to us. I definitely look forward to working with them again, and I hope to see them down range," he said.

A Bulgarian Soldier coaches a Soldier with the 1st Armored Division on firing a Bulgarian weapon at the Novo Selo Training Area.





Iron Alliance Extends to Black Sea

Engineer Brigade builds strong alliance with Romania

Story by LeAnne MacAllister

Photo by SGT Sam Smith

Nestled near the border of Ukraine and the Danube River delta, 300 kilometers east of Bucharest, the 1st Armored Division Engineer Brigade built a "miniature city" as the Romanians would say.

Constructed in approximately a month's time, the Life Support Area — a garrison city of tents and equipment — housed nearly 2,000 U.S.

and Romanian Soldiers, as well as contractors. The ranges and training lanes covered an area of approximately 23 square kilometers. With Morale, Welfare and Recreation and the Army and Air Force Exchange Service at Soldiers' disposal, ROMEX 05 built a fully-operational training center, leading the Army in paving the way for units of action.

Yet this miniature city was only created for one month of fully integrated training.

ROMEX 05 offered U.S. and Romanian Armies an opportunity to develop interoperability while strengthening their newly formed NATO alliance. Small arms training, convoy and live-fire-exercises, military operations in urban terrain,

...Continued next page...





Romanian Soldiers use their vehicle for protection while engaging in a convoy-operation exercise with U.S. Soldiers.



A Romanian Soldier with the "Red Scorpions" camouflages himself amidst a bed of sunflowers during a training exercise with U.S. Soldiers.



After dismounting from the back of a M939 5-ton truck, U.S. Soldiers prepare to fire during a training exercise with Romanian Soldiers.

as well as community development and cultural exchanges, were included in the largest bilateral U.S.-Romania training exercise to date.

The 1st Armored Division, Engineer Brigade, planned and executed ROMEX 05. The 7th Army Training Command built the ranges and served as observer-controllers for the exercise. Soldiers from the Texas Army National Guard's 36th Infantry Division, 71st Brigade Combat Team, Alabama National Guard's 877th Engineer Battalion and Romania's 26th Infantry Battalion, the "Red Scorpions," served as the main training body.

"This exercise is groundbreaking in many ways," said COL Lou Marich, commander of Task Force Iron Alliance and 1AD's Engineer Brigade.

"We are here to train our armies together, to develop Army National Guard Soldiers from Texas and Alabama with state-of-the-art U.S. Army Europe equipment, build friendships with our NATO allies, combine our efforts in community development projects, and ultimately create interoperability that will become essential to future missions," said Marich in an impromptu address made to local Mayors in Romania July 21.

COL Olimpiu Popescu, co-commander of the Task Force, worked together with Marich throughout the planning and operational phases of ROMEX 05.

"We have integrated our armies at every level. The ability for our Soldiers to work with another country's Soldiers, utilizing both of our nations' tactical vehicles and

equipment provides all of us a great opportunity. This exercise is key in continuing to develop our strong, successful alliance," he said.

Vehicles and equipment were provided by both nations' forces.

"Getting these training tools here was very important because they lend capability to the training," said COL Lou Marich task force commander.

Romanian and U.S. Soldiers received the opportunity to train on their partner nation's equipment.

Traian Basescu, president of Romania, toured the LSA and training areas on July 24, meeting with Soldiers and congratulating them on their accomplishments.

"We are happy to be good partners with Americans, and I believe that Americans are glad to be good partners for us. The trust is not only on the political level. It is on the military level, starting from each Soldier to general," said Basescu.

"I'm happy that here in Babadag we have this joint training opportunity."

At the headquarters level, training and collaboration was evident in every function.

"Everything, from logistics to medical support to force protection to personnel has been led by teams comprised of U.S. and Romanian Soldiers," said Marich.

SFC Tudor Vrinceanu, Romanian Military Police, has worked with the U.S. military several times, including four Kosovo deployments.

Vrinceanu said most of his Soldiers learn from experience since their Army is relatively young.

"Each one of these experiences teaches us more," said Vrinceanu.

"All of us are happy working together

with American Soldiers. This way both of our armies will continue to go in the right direction."

At the ranges and in the training lanes, the same joint cooperation created an environment for Soldiers to hone their skills while developing interoperability with their NATO ally.

The 71st Brigade Combat Team reorganized their units for the exercise by integrating one squad from the Romanian Army into each platoon.

State-of-the-art training equipment was transported from garrisons in Germany for use in the exercise. Deployable Intelligence Support Element equipment, used at two military operations in urban terrain sites, was a big hit with both U.S. and Romanian Soldiers.

"It's amazing. This is just incredible training," said a Romanian Soldier at the end of a mission.

SGT Bogden Stanei, Texas National Guard, who immigrated to the United States as a child, saw the training as a once in a lifetime opportunity.

"This training has been great," said Stanei. "We Guard Soldiers haven't seen some of this equipment in previous training exercises and it's a really good experience. Plus, the Romanian Soldiers we work with are catching on quickly. It's been a lot of fun working together."

The joint platoons have also executed convoy live-fire missions. Basescu observed a demonstration of the exercise during his visit, watching as Romanian and U.S. Soldiers reacted to a simulated attack.

"This training prepares all Sol-

diers for deployments to military theaters of operation. It is one more step in our strategic partnership with the United States," said Basescu.

The barren lot outside the school where Ghincu Mircea served as principal for 39 years has been transformed into a playground. The community, unsure of how to show their gratitude, continually visited the site bearing gifts of fruit for the Soldiers. By the mid-point of the exercise, community members had taken up hammers and paint brushes to work side by side with the Soldiers.

Construction took place at four rural schools.

MAJ Gary Beaty, civil military affairs officer, who organized the community development projects, said that the programs continued to strengthen the U.S. military's relationship with Romania at the local level.

"Several of these schools are in desperate need for upgrades. It's a good opportunity for us to get involved," said Beaty.

Besides school renovations, other community relations programs were carried out among smaller groups.

The National Guard Soldiers collected more than \$5000 in donations to provide eight schools with new supplies.

Army doctors and medic Soldiers gave children stuffed animals at Tulcea County Hospital while there for a medical evacuation training exercise.

Training was completed on Aug. 2 and was marked by an official closing ceremony, but the interoperability and camaraderie developed at ROMEX 05 will continue.



Iron Soldiers are Warriors First

Gunnery Lines No Longer Just for Combat Arms Soldiers

Story and photos by PFC Tanya C. Polk

"The enemy could care less if you are a VCR repair man or an infantry man. You are a target to him or her. You need to be able to defend yourself, destroy the enemy and continue the mission," said SGM Thomas Klingel, 1st Armored Division's training sergeant major.

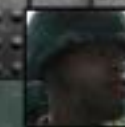
All Soldiers with the 1st Armored Division, regardless of their military occupational specialties (MOS) have been training

on Iron Warrior Tables in an exercise known as Iron Warrior Gunnery at the Joint Multinational Training Center in Grafenwoehr, Germany. Iron Warrior training was recently developed to ensure all Soldiers are trained to accomplish any mission on the battlefield.

"The purpose of the Iron Warrior Training is to make every Soldier within the division a survivor and lethal on the modern day

...Continued page 22...

SSG Daryl Archie, imagery analyst, and SPC Joshua L. Carlisle, intelligence analyst, with the 501st Military Intelligence Battalion engage pop-up targets at table VIII in Grafenwoehr, Germany.



battlefield no matter who they are, what their background is, or what their MOS is," said Klingel. "Every Soldier in the 1st Armored Division is a warrior first."

"For most units, this is a new concept," Klingel continued. "The days of developing gunnery lines only for combat arms units in the 1st Armored Division are now over."

The framework of the Iron

"We dont do this every day. We do sergeant's-time training but its not nearly as cool as this!"

PFC Connie R. Taylor
501st Military Intelligence Battalion

Warrior Gunnery program is derived from 1AD's 40 warrior tasks and nine battle drills.

One of the non-combat arms units who partook in this gunnery training recently was the 501st Military Intelligence Battalion.

"We started with the qualifications of individual weapons and then went to convoy drills," said CPT Chris Heatherly, the company commander with the 501st.

"This is the middle point where we do single-vehicle blank and live fire which culminates into multiple-vehicle blank and live fire, which will be shot later in the week."

The middle point, better known as Iron Warrior Tables VII and VIII, requires troops suppress fire on targets while on the move in their tactical vehicle.

"If the Soldier has a Humvee,

then they will go through the tables in his Humvee the way a tanker would go through the tables in their tank," said Klingel.

"The Soldiers have to come together as a team so that they can react to an enemy properly, destroy the enemy and continue on with the mission," said Klingel.

"We worked really well as a team, we did really well with communication," said PFC

Connie R. Taylor, an imagery analyst with the 501st. "I realized how important a driver's job really is. If I didn't drive well enough, then the gunner couldn't aim well on the targets."

In working together as a team, the Soldiers learned how to conduct operations on the battlefield correctly.

"When I went down range, I had none of this training," said

...Continued next page...

Locked and loaded, Soldiers with the 501st Military Intelligence Battalion search for targets at Iron Warrior Table XI during Iron Warrior Gunnery training in Grafenwoer.



SGT Gregory A. Hill, a supply sergeant with the 501st. "This gives Soldiers that have not been down range some good experience and teaches how to do operations properly."

After completing Iron Warrior Table VIII, Soldiers move on to Iron Warrior Tables IX through XII.

"Once a crew can fight from their vehicle, they move onto mounted convoy life-fire runs which are tables IX through XII," said Klingel.

Iron Warrior Gunnery proved to be effective training for the military intelligence Soldiers.

"We don't do this everyday," said Taylor. "We do sergeant's-time training, but it's not nearly as cool as this."

"We're trying to develop muscle memory where all this comes natural," said SGM William McNeal, 4th Brigade sergeant major.

"Reality is, we go down range like everyone else," said Taylor. "We definitely needed this training."



SSG Daryl Archie, 501st Military Battalion, alerts observers at the tower before moving his crew out to Iron Warrior Table XII in Grafenwoher.

Crouched beside his Humvee, a Soldier with the 501st Military Intelligence Battalion engages pop-up targets at Iron Warrior Table XII's first checkpoint in Grafenwoher.

1-1 Cav Puts New Counter-Sniper Gun Mount to the Test

Story and photos by PFC Tanya C. Polk

Tankers with the 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment tested a new weapons system for their M1A1 Abrams Battle Tank, at the Joint Multinational Training Center in Grafenwoher, Germany.

The counter-sniper anti-material mount (CSAMM) provides the M1 with heavy machine gun and counter-sniper firepower to enable the tank crew to successfully accomplish various combat objectives in urban combat operations and training.

"Basically what it does is mounts a 50-caliber machine gun on the mantle of an M1 and allows you to use the tank's fire control system that you use for regular main-gun engagements to allow the gunner another option for more precision engagements," said CPT Stephen Banks, commander of 1-1 Cav.

The CSAMM was designed so that Soldiers can maintain accurate counter-sniper fire without being exposed to enemy weapons.

"It's a precision weapon," said SSG Gene Schmoltz, tank



Soldiers with the 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, and Bill Smith, manager of Gunmasters Defense Systems, attach the new counter-sniper anti-material mount to the M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank in Grafenwoher, Germany.

master gunner with 1-1 Cav. "We pretty much use it to snipe out the enemy."

The CSAMM also helps to control valuable main-gun ammunition.

"This reduces collateral damage in an urban environment," said Banks.

"It can very accurately select

a target and engage without damage to non-hostiles or friendly people in the area or the buildings that are around them."

"Right now we have 122 of these," said Bill Smith, manager of Gunmasters Defense Systems.

"This will give the Soldiers additional tools instead of having limited capabilities."



THE NEW ARMY COMBAT UNIFORM

Story by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava



SMA Kenneth O. Preston, explains the changes of the new Army Combat Uniform when he visited 1st Brigade Soldiers at Ray Barracks, Friedberg, Germany in September. Photo by Pfc. Jennifer McFadden

From the collar to the new cargo pockets below the trouser knees, the new Army Combat Uniform has been designed for comfort and with the Soldiers' needs in mind. Safety and practicality are also integral aspects of the new, more subdued battle garb.

"Out of all the uniforms fielded to date, this is definitely superior to the others. They really took the Soldiers' needs into consideration when designing this new uniform," said Paul Rivera, leader for the 11-

man crew from Fort Belvoir, Va., and Fort Hood, Texas, who came to Germany to outfit the Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team with the first issue of the latest in battle attire.

Starting at the top, the mandarin collar turns up and fastens together in the front with Velcro, to prevent chaffing when wearing the outer tactical vest.

Except for the new two-way zipper that has replaced the front buttons on the shirt, Velcro is prevalent throughout the new uniform.

The upper front pockets on the shirt are now slanted for easier access when wearing body armor and the pocket buttons have been replaced with Velcro.

The pen slots inside the breast pockets have been moved to the upper left arm sleeve.

The new shirt has no pockets on the lower front portion. Avoiding a bulky feeling if the shirt has to be tucked inside the pants.

The zipper along the front of the shirt opens from the top and bottom allowing for ventilation without having to remove the shirt.

On the back of the shirt, pleats expand the shirt to provide more shoulder room and ease of movement.

There are slots on the sleeves to insert elbow pads, which are also easily sealed with Velcro.

Topping the shirt are Velcro name and rank tapes and infrared tabs on

each arm to assist in detecting the Soldier on the battlefield. The infrared tabs can be concealed with Velcro covers when not in use.

On the pants, the draw straps on the sides next to the belt loops, which were a hindrance when wearing a belt, have been removed and a single draw string has been placed in front on the inside of the waist.

The cargo pockets on each leg are slanted, again for easy access and a draw string has been incorporated on each pocket for security.

The pants also feature knee pad slots that easily open and close with Velcro strips.

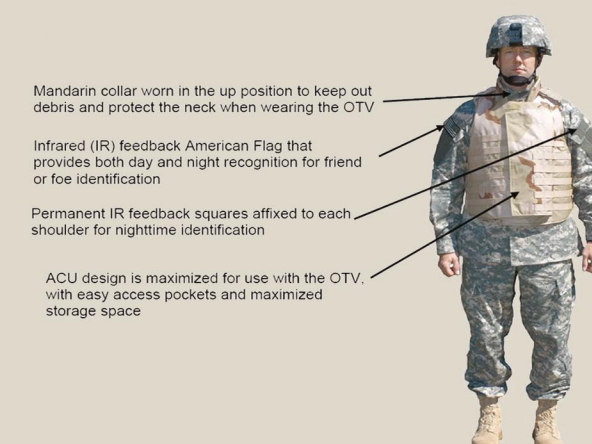
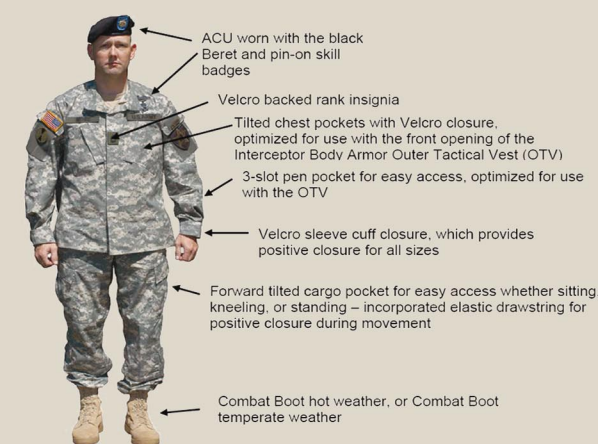
Cargo pockets have also been added below the knees. These pockets actually replace the two lower shirt pockets that no longer exist.

The camouflage scheme has also been altered. A series of small squares about an eighth of an inch on each side featuring light greens and grays make up the new pattern.

Gone are the blotchy dark greens and blacks. All traces of black have been removed to avoid the detection of a Soldiers' silhouette on the battlefield.

There is no summer or winter versions of the new ACU. Only one thickness of material has been incorporated to avoid clutter in a Soldiers' wardrobe.

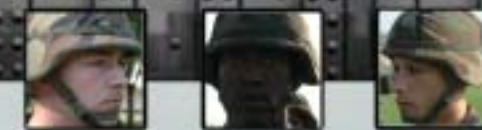
Rounding off the new uniform issue for the Soldiers of the 2nd BCT are numerous accessories like



matching hats, Kevlar covers, subdued tee shirts, tan "Schwarzkopf" boots and numerous other items that loaded down the Soldiers' duffel bags.

Basis of Issue per Soldier

4 ACU Coat	2 Unit Patches
4 CU trousers	2 Colored U.S. Flags
4 T-shirts (sand colored)	1 ACU Patrol Hat
3 Name tapes	1 Sun Hat
2 Rank, Velcro	1 Knee pad set
1 Rank, Pin-on	1 Elbow pad set
2 U.S. Army Tapes	1 ACH Helmet cover



Iron Brigade Prepares for Combat

1-6, 2-6 Infantry get Mission-Ready at Hohenfels

"From the beginning of the war to now, there has been a big transformation," said SSG Julio Fortis, a section leader of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment. "We went from a wartime to a peacekeeping mission, and peacekeeping starts with teamwork."

Soldiers with 1st Armored Division's 2nd "Iron" Brigade have been undergoing mission readiness exercises in Hohenfels Training Area in Germany, from Aug. 7 through Sept. 4.

Equipped with their go-to-war weapons and a multiple integrated laser engagement system, also referred to as "MILES" gear, the Iron Brigade Soldiers practiced reacting to multiple scenarios in mock villages and cities representing Iraq.

"This prepares Soldiers that have never been down-

range. Right now, we just got mortared and some Soldiers don't know the first thing to do," said Fortis. Soldiers reacted to more than to a mortar attack. They also encountered ambushes, conducted cordon and search operations and hostage rescues.

Observer-controllers from the 7th U.S. Army Training Command witnessed these scripted, yet free-flowing scenarios ensuring that the Soldiers executed each mission correctly and to Army standards.

"Today my mission was to guard the colonel," said

...Continued page 30...



Story and photos by PFC Tanya C. Polk

Iron Brigade Soldiers pull rear security while simulated Iraqi National Guard Soldiers perform a cordon search.



Out on a mission, Soldiers with 1st Armored Division's 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment clear a building in the mock-village of Samarra, Iraq in the Hohenfels Training Area, Germany.





Fortis. "The colonel had to go and speak with the sheik to find out what problems were going on and what help they needed in the town of Samarra." Cordon search and operations took place in both the city of Samarra and Ad Dujyal.

"We stopped a bus that was entering the area and we searched the personnel on the bus," said SSG Derrick T. Finley, a section leader with Co. A, 2-6 IN.

"We found one person with information, and we turned him over to the Iraqi Police."

The U.S. Soldiers are now training to with the Iraqis.

"We have an Iraqi National Guard," continued Fortis. "If they're present, then they will take over. We want them to start taking control of their country. Today, they took over the cordon search for us," he said.

"We're training with the Iraqi army so that way they can provide their own security in their cities and the Americans can go home."

SFC Jon Otero

Company A, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment

"We're here to get in close relations with the Iraqi police and to help provide stability and peace in the town of Ad Dujyal," said SFC Jon Otero, a platoon sergeant with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment.

"The commander made an agreement with the mayor to work hand-in-hand in patrolling and protecting the town for the next three days," said Otero. "The town has been having a problem with drive-bys (shootings) and smuggled weapons. We're here to help stop these problems."

The troops prevented these problems from escalating

Soldiers with 1st Armored Division's 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment and a German translator patrol the streets of a mock-village of Samarra, Iraq during a mission-readiness exercise in Hohenfels.



"...life is hard on both sides and working together it gets better."

CPT Michael Schoenfeldt

Company C, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment, commander

by increasing security in the Iraqi villages.

"The biggest thing here is security," said Fortis. "We don't want to treat everybody as a threat, but at the same time security is extremely important."

The troops worked alongside the Iraqi Soldiers and Iraqi police to better secure the villages.

"The only way to do it is in conjunction with them and not against them," said CPT Michael Schoenfeldt, company commander, Company C, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment. "Working against the Iraqi police does absolutely nothing."

"We're training with the Iraqi army so that way they can provide their own security in their cities and the Americans can go home," said Otero.

Working together proved to be an effective approach.

"Together Soldiers and Iraqi police were able to rescue a hostage down here," said Schoenfeldt.

In working together with the Iraqis, the American Soldiers learned a bit about Iraqi customs.

"From 1 p.m. until 2 p.m. the Iraqis have prayer time. Pretty much everything here is sacred," said Finley. "We have to push back our vehicles from their town and respect their culture."

"The main thing that I want the Soldiers to take away from this exercise is respect for the Iraqis and their culture and understanding that life is hard on both sides and working together it gets better," said Schoenfeldt.

"When the Soldiers go in, they should go in at 110 percent and remember the improvements of every action," said Otero. "When it comes to war, which is already too late for any practice, they'll know just what to do."



141 Signals

Story and Photos by Rick Haverinen



Soldiers from the 141st Signal Battalion, 1st Armored Division, Wiesbaden, Germany, put their best foot forward as they begin their 100-mile ruckmarching journey at Nijmegen. This four-day event displayed a tradition that has been passed down since 1907.

Soldiers from 1st Armored Division and Soldiers from the Hessen geographical area tested their mettle and boot leather last month at the Netherlands' ultra-marathon march for civilians and multi-national military organizations.

About 5,000 military members from 18 nations blended with 42,500 civilians to walk at the Nijmegen Four Day Marches July 19-22.

While a handful of American military members joined troops from other NATO countries to form international components, the United States was represented by nine all-American military teams that pounded boots against pavement for a total odometer reading of 100 miles.

"The pluses are the camaraderie and the fun that happens here," said 1LT Mark Miller, a platoon leader for 141st Signal Bn. in Wiesbaden, "and also the fact that it's very challenging. So upon completing it, I would say it's a plus that we have some pride in having finished, but I guess the drawback is the pain during the march."

"Being an NCO, you're always leading soldiers in training, but this is different," said SSG Troy Thrasher, a desk sergeant at Giessen MP station. "Ruckmarching and regular PT are totally different. A ruckmarch is a total body workout and you will be exhausted over time. And that's the big thing here. Can you live through the pain and keep marching?"

Pain becomes an unwelcome traveling companion because the Dutch terra firma is terribly firm. Don't

victory at Nijmegen

let those old Flemish landscape painters fool you with their soft colors and dramatic clouds. Down at the foot level, the Netherlands' asphalt and concrete are as hard as any. There are no soft tulip beds to walk at Nijmegen.

Miller was already prepared for the assault on his feet because he is a veteran of the march, having done it the previous year.

Thrasher and most of the other marchers were newbies.

"One of my NCOs brought this up back in March, about a possibility we do it as a team," said CPT Daniel Horn, the commander for Headquarters and Headquarters Det., 284th Base Support Bn., in Giessen. "I said, okay, let's do it."

Horn said he has learned more about his troops by spending so much time on the road with them, collectively working on completing a difficult task.

"You see the morale working as we're out there marching, and then there's the intestinal fortitude," Horn said. "Even if they don't get to day two or day three, just being out here is helping the rest of the team get through it for day four."

There's more than a little pressure on the military members to keep going.

If more than 10 percent of the personnel on any team do not complete



PFC Mark Yeoman helps 1LT Mark Miller with his worn feet at a rest stop July 20 during the Nijmegen Four Day Marches. Both are assigned to 141st Signal Battalion in Wiesbaden. The 141st Signal was one of only four all-U.S. military units to be presented with the team award for completing Nijmegen's 100 miles over four days with at least 90 percent of its personnel still on their feet.



The team from the 141st Signal Battalion nears the end of the second day of the Nijmegen Four Day Marches as they enter Camp Heumensoord July 20

the 100 miles at Nijmegen for any reason whatsoever, the group will be disqualified from receiving a team award. However, all marchers completing the trek will be awarded the coveted individual medal with the green and yellow striped ribbon.

Of three signal units in this year's march, only 141st Signal Bn. received a team award. The other team awards went to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center; 6th Bn, 52nd Air Defense Artillery; and 9th Engineer Bn.

Most of the American military team members were from European military units, but a group of Airmen flew space-A from Edwards Air Force Base in California to march. The U.S. Military Academy at West Point and the 101st Airborne Div. at Fort Campbell, Ky., each had one representative.

Those who aren't too exhausted by the end of the day to visit the tents of servicemembers from other nations at Camp Heumensoord discover the exuberant social side of the Nijmegen march.

"The attraction is the camaraderie within your own team and within the United States military," Miller said, "but also with all the other militaries and civilians that are out here. There's been no other event that I've participated in, that I've felt such close ties with the military units of all the other countries. We're like one big team out here. It's a really good feeling."

The finish line at is either the area right in front of, or else inside at the serving bar, of the Camp Heumensoord beer tent. There seems to be a tradition of stunts as teams

from various nations end the day's march. A German team entered the tent and then all dropped moaning to low-crawl the last few meters as if struggling to reach a mythical glistening glass of Death Valley pilsner. A Danish medical unit had to pause somewhere near the end to re-suit, as they marched into the tent wearing surgical caps and gowns over their uniforms.

Even when a unit doesn't provide special theatrics at their finish, they still receive applause from the teams that hang around after their own return to the camp.

Their appreciation is icing on the cake to what you've lavishly experienced all day long. Nijmegen is populated during the four day march by hundreds of thousands of expert cheerleaders.

"The level of support is just great," said SGT Matthew Preston, Co. C, 141st Signal Bn., "and it's really a treat to see them come out. They'll sit there for eight hours a day, or however long there are marchers on the road. It's a tribute to the spirit of the Dutch people."

Nijmegen is a stadium 30 feet wide by 25 miles long and it's a sell-out crowd.

The fans are very young children slapping high fives with the marchers, elderly residents rolled out from retirement homes, and everyone in between. They hand out water, ice tea, lemonade, sport drink, apples, sliced cucumber, pieces of sausage, and candy to the marchers. In a rural area of fields dotted with cows, the locals were distributing containers of milk. It's a four-day utopia. Your job is to beat up your feet and legs by walking a very long distance with 47,500 other people. In return you are rewarded with snacks, drinks, medical care, places to rest, surprisingly clean toilets, and overwhelming feedback that what you are doing is a very good thing.

The traditional marches began in the Dutch Army in 1907, and it became a four-day event in 1909. Women participated for the first time in 1913. In 1925 the march was focused in Nijmegen. The march's first flag parade was in 1928 to coincide with the Olympics in Amsterdam. By 1932 there were more civilians than military members marching and in 1954 those walking exceeded 10,000. Rapid growth followed and the total number of marchers had to be capped at 47,000 in 2004 but demand increased the total an additional 500 this year.

There are routes drawn up for 30, 40, and 50 kilometers and each day's path is different. The third day is a bit

diabolical as planners make the route go up and down seven hills. The servicemembers do a 40 kilometer route each day, and since their hike starts and ends at Camp Heumensoord, about three miles south of downtown Nijmegen where the civilian hikers specially-marked route that accounts for the difference.

Some of the U.S. units participating this year could only field a few members, so the smaller groups were combined to reach the minimum of 11 marchers.

As you might imagine, completing the walk each day is a joy;

and finishing the 100 miles on Friday is a celebration.

"They were on cloud nine," said CPT Jon Beck, the adjutant for U.S. Army Garrison, Schinnen, and project officer for this year's American military participation.

"It's almost like a runner's high after finishing a marathon. They were very happy to have completed the march. I noticed as they headed into the closing ceremony, most of them were limping pretty heavily. But when they marched through the grandstand at the completion, none of them were limping. They sucked it up."



Children at Nijmegen give Soldiers high fives, hand out snacks and ask for souvenirs during the annual event.



Old Ironsides and team up to tackle

the Big Red One Air Assault Course

Story by SGT W. Wayne Marlow



Soldiers from Air Assault class 05-01 cross the finish of their 12-mile foot march at Camp Robertson July 29. Completing the foot march in under three hours was the Soldiers' final task before graduation. Photo by SPC Joe Alger

Standing in line at the base of a repel tower on Camp Robertson, Schweinfurt, Germany PV2 Gregory Hernandez said he felt calm. But he realized that could all change very soon.

"On the top, it could be a little different," said Hernandez, who serves with B Company, 9th Engineer Battalion, and who was a student in the first Army Air Assault Course taught in Germany.

First Armored Division Soldiers were among those taking part in this premier class.

The students' first bounds down the 52-foot tower came with a reassuring

wall to fall back on. But next they came down the other side of the tower, with only their brake hand and air separating them from the ground.

For Hernandez and the rest, the repel tower was just one of the challenges to overcome.

They also experienced an excruciating "Zero Day" that saw more than 25 percent of the class wash out.

There were foot marches, including a 12-miler on the final day that had to be finished in three hours, despite lugging 35 pounds of gear and carrying a rifle.

"I felt pretty sore and a little beat up," 2LT Joshua Hearn said after the

foot march. Hearn serves with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment.

"It was a pretty good gut check. I didn't know the last six miles would be so rough,"

Besides marching, there was sling load operations and several of written tests, which took some of the Soldiers by surprise.

"It's definitely more mentally challenging than I originally expected," said SPC Christian Smith of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade. "I didn't realize we'd have to remember such a great quantity of numbers. There's a lot of information to take

in."

Hernandez expressed similar sentiments. He said he disliked the written tests, and he described the sling load phase as stressful.

"It was pretty hard," he said. "I had a no-go on one of them, but I retested and got it. It's been a lot more than I expected. I didn't expect it to be so much work."

While both were surprised at how mentally taxing the course proved to be, they both expected and received many physical demands.

Hernandez said he considered Zero Day more stressful than his first day of basic training.



Rappelling was just one of the many requirements facing students in the first Army Air Assault Course taught in Germany, held at camp Robertson from July 18-29. Photo by SGT W. Wayne Marlow

"It was interesting," he said. "We had a lot of dropouts, and it was a lot of work."

The day prior to Zero Day consisted of in-processing, which convinced Smith the course would be much more laid-back than he thought.

"I expected them to be on us the first day, and there was nothing," he said. "So the next day I was expecting it to be relaxed, and they were firing smoke."

It all served as a lead-in to the rest of the course with its foot marches, repelling and occasional "smoke sessions."

"I did a lot of marching back in basic training, but here you have to go a lot faster. You have to meet a certain time," Hernandez said.

Along those lines, Hernandez advises those who come to the course to "be good at physical fitness training and good at testing, and don't be nervous."

The hands-on portion of sling-load training came on Day Five. One Soldier would signal a slowly descending helicopter into place, and when it hovered low enough, two more Soldiers would hook the load into place.

While the testing and sling load operations caught Smith by surprise, he found the rest of the course to his liking.

"I've repelled before. I'm not afraid of heights," he said. "This is the fun stuff. I'm really looking forward to repelling out of Black Hawks. That's the main reason I came here."

In spite of the smoke sessions and raised voices, Hernandez and Smith report the students had nothing but respect for the cadre, who are National Guardsmen with the Warrior Training Center at Fort Benning, Ga.

"They're very professional, but you must pay attention and pay attention to detail," Smith said. "Sometimes it reverts to what it was like in basic training, but what are you going to do?"

Hearn also had high praise for the instructors.

"They were very student oriented," he said. "They stayed out as late as we needed them to every night to make



COL James O. Barclay, 1st Infantry Division assistant division commander for maneuver, pins air assault wings on the honor graduates of Air Assault class 05-01 during their graduation ceremony July 29 at Camp Robertson. Photo by SPC Joe Alger

sure we knew how to do each of the tasks."

Originally, the Warrior Training Center served as a pre-Ranger school, but it added air assault to its curriculum after similar schools were shut down by the 25th Infantry Division and the 10th Mountain Division. Germany was selected as a course site because the previous 1st Infantry Division commanding general wanted Air Assault School to be offered as a reenlistment incentive while the division served in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II.



Family Readiness Groups for 1st Armored

Prepare Division's deployment

Story by LeAnne MacAllister



Family Readiness support assistants get prepared for their units to deploy by attending different training events such as the virtual family readiness group training that was held at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield, August 24-25. Photo by SPC Jennifer McFadden

The 1st Armored Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team and Family Readiness Groups are working together to prepare families for the road ahead.

"Soldiers can concentrate and focus on the mission when they know that the needs of their families are met. The more knowledgeable families are about the numerous resources available to them, the stronger and more capable they are of conducting day to day activities while their Soldier is deployed," said 2nd Brigade combat team commander COL Robert Scurlock.

According to Scurlock, FRGs

provide a means of fellowship, camaraderie, and support, as well as being a great resource for information for commanders, the unit, and the community.

The 2nd BCT is ready. The rear-detachment teams have been formed. Family Readiness Support Assistant positions, full-time government service jobs created to support the FRGs and rear-detachment at the battalion level and above, have been filled.

Training courses, offered by Army Community Service to all FRG leaders, FRsAs and rear-detachment staff, have been presented to large groups of

participants over the past couple months. The courses provide FRGs and the unit teams with the tools and resources they need to effectively serve Army families.

A sharp increase in participation has been visible since news of the 2nd Brigade's fall deployment was released this Spring.

"We have completed three cycles of FRG training since March, and we have seen a steady increase in participation with each cycle," said Ginalyn Cowles, ACS Deployment Mobilization Specialist.

The basis for the course is found in examining a simple question: "If I were an FRG leader, what information would I want to give to my family members?" she said.

Topics covered included conflict resolution, team building, public affairs, marketing and newsletter basics, leader and group learning, volunteer management and fundraising.

"Many of the lessons, to include the stress management portion, were very helpful because not only can I use it for FRG leadership, but any type of leadership – dealing with my child or spouse. We received some important tools," said Sue Orosz, 2nd Infantry 6th Battalion FRG co-leader.

In addition to the two-day training course, ACS has also offered a one-day Deployment Information Training seminar covering topics such as legal documents, casualty notification, Army Emergency Relief, temporary return to the States and childcare issues.

"The Family Readiness Group is a Commander's program that must be developed early and exercised often," said Scurlock. "Families helping families and the community through volunteerism and helping keep each other informed is a key to success."

Defined as an organization of family members, volunteers, Soldiers and civilian employees belonging to a unit who together provide an avenue of mutual support and assistance and a network of communication among members, the chain of command and community resources.

FRGs emphasize the need for readiness among families in today's Army.

"I think the FRG training provides me a lot of good information. When I got elected for the position, I didn't know what to do. Since taking the course, I have a better idea of what I can do and how I can provide a better job for my FRG," said Connie Solano, an 8th Finance Battalion FRG leader.

Cowles explained that said the new training is valuable to new FRG leaders, as well as seasoned community leaders.

"In preparing for deployment, both new and previous FRG leaders are coming to get the latest information out there to assist in running a successful FRG," she said.

Training doesn't stop in the classroom for the 2nd BCT. While at Hohenfels training area, FRG channels were exercised as part of the Mission Rehearsal Exercise.

"We operated Websites, conducted video teleconferences, and rehearsed

procedures to notify families about situations that may happen down range," said Scurlock.

The 2nd BCT and its rear-detachment plan to continue training so that all family members have the information they need before their Soliders deploy

"We will continue to conduct briefings to ensure all family members are provided the opportunity to obtain all required documentation and information needed prior to their Soldier's deployment," said Scurlock.

"Families are an important part of our team."



MAJ James Miller, with HHC DISCOM, and other Family Readiness Support Assistants train to update and care for the new web sites created for the virtual Family Readiness Groups. This group has the privilege and honor to be the first for 1st Armored Division. Photo by SPC Jennifer McFadden.